

**REMARKS**

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-17 will remain pending and stand ready for further action on the merits. Claims 3-7 and 13-17 are withdrawn from consideration.

In the instant amendment, claims 1-2, 8 and 11 have been amended in order to more clearly recite the present invention.

The amendments made herein to the claims do not incorporate new matter into the application as originally filed.

In this regard, the amendments do not raise substantial new issues for the Examiner's consideration and require no further search on the Examiner's part. At the same time, the instant amendments put the pending claims into condition for allowance and into a more proper format for issuance in a United States patent, by overcoming all outstanding rejections and objections of record.

Accordingly, proper consideration of each of the pending claims (i.e., claims 1-2 and 8-12) is respectfully requested at present, as is entry of the present amendment.

***Claim Objection***

Claim 2 has been objected to under 37 CFR § 1.75(c) as being in improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of the previous claims.

Upon entry of the present amendment to claim 2, this rejection has been rendered moot.

Claim 2, as currently amended, recites a metal silicide compound which is specifically limited to a silicide oxide, silicide nitride, silicide oxynitride, silicide oxycarbide, silicide nitride

carbide or silicide oxide nitride carbide. Thus, the scope of claim 1 is broader than that of claim 2, since claim 1 encompasses "silicide carbide" while claim 2 does not.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

***Claim Rejection Under 35 USC § 112, 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph***

Claims 1-2 and 8-12 have been rejected under 35 USC § 112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph as being indefinite.

Upon entry of the present amendments to claims 1 and 8, each rejection has been rendered moot.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

***Interview***

If the present response does not result in allowance of the above-identified application, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner grant a personal interview. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned to schedule a personal interview.

**CONCLUSION**

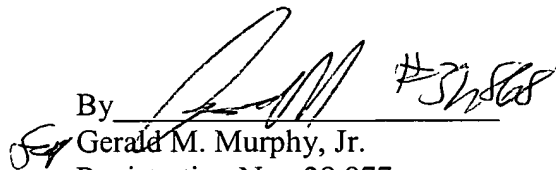
In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Gerald M. Murphy, Jr. (Reg. No. 28,977) at the telephone number below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: March 22, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By   
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